

In the claims

Please amend claims 39 and 44 as follows.

1. - 38. (Cancelled)

39. (Currently amended) [A] In a solid shaped article manufactured by compression or compaction, said solid shaped article containing a biologically active ingredient and a hydrocarbon wax or natural wax, the improvement wherein said solid shaped article contains the biologically active ingredient in the form of [containing] coated biologically active ingredient-loaded beads and wherein said solid shaped article further comprises [comprising] biologically inactive cushioning beads, wherein said cushioning beads comprise at least one compressible cushioning component consisting essentially of a microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or a natural wax, the said wax being at least 30% by weight of the biologically inactive cushioning beads, wherein said cushioning beads optionally include up to 70% by weight of another biologically inactive compressible cushioning component or pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, and wherein the weight ratio of the biologically inactive cushioning beads to the coated biologically active ingredient-loaded beads is between 30:70 and 70:30.

40. (Previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the biologically active ingredient-loaded beads are coated with a coating material for controlling or sustaining the release properties of the biologically active ingredient or for taste masking or for imparting resistance to gastric fluid.

41. (Cancelled)

42. (Previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the

cushioning beads include at least 5% by weight of at least a biologically inactive pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

43. (Original) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein over 98% of the molecules of the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax have a molecular chain length ranging from 20 to 75 carbon atoms.

44. (Currently amended) [A] In a method for treating a plant in need of a biological treatment or a mammal in need of a medication by bringing the said plant into contact with an efficient amount of a biologically active ingredient or by administering to said mammal an efficient amount of said medication containing a biologically active ingredient, the improvement wherein the said biologically active ingredient is provided to the plant or mammal in the form of a solid shaped article manufactured by compression or compaction, said solid shaped article containing coated biologically active ingredient-loaded beads and further comprising biologically inactive cushioning beads, wherein said cushioning beads comprise at least one compressible cushioning component consisting essentially of a microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or a natural wax, the said wax being at least 30% by weight of the biologically inactive cushioning beads, wherein said cushioning beads optionally include up to 70% by weight of another biologically inactive compressible cushioning component or pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, and wherein the weight ratio of the biologically inactive cushioning beads to the coated biologically active ingredient-loaded beads is between 30:70 and 70:30.

45. (Cancelled)

46. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the cushioning beads include at least 5% by weight of at least a biologically inactive pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

47. (Previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax has a dynamic viscosity at 98.9°C (DIN 52007) greater than or equal to 2 mPa.s and/or a congealing point between 50°C and 90°C.

48. (Previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax comprises a mixture of 30 to 90% by weight of linear hydrocarbons and 10 to 70% by weight of branched hydrocarbons.

49. (Previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the distribution of molecular chain lengths within the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax is such that less than 6% of the molecules have less than 25 carbon atoms, 6 to 50% of the molecules have 25 to 29 carbon atoms, 20 to 45% of the molecules have 30 to 34 carbon atoms and 7 to 70% of the molecules have at least 35 carbon atoms.

50. (Previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax is a product of catalytic polymerization of ethylene or copolymerization of ethylene with minor amounts of linear alpha-olefins having from 3 to 12 carbon atoms or maleic anhydride.

51. (Previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the natural wax is selected from carnauba wax, candelilla wax, palm wax, lignite wax, ozokerite, lardaceine, ceresine wax and China wax.

52. (Previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the wax comprises compounds selected from saturated hydrocarbons having from 25 to 31 carbon atoms, saturated alcohols having from 25 to 31 carbon atoms, saturated monocarboxylic acids having from 25 to 31 carbon atoms, esters obtained from the said alcohols and monocarboxylic acids and having from 50 to 62 carbon atoms, and their mixtures.

53. (Previously presented) A solid shaped article according to claim 39, wherein the cushioning beads have an average particle size of 0.5 to 2.0 mm.

54. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax has a dynamic viscosity at 98.9°C (DIN 52007) greater than or equal to 2 mPa.s and/or a congealing point between 50°C and 90°C.

55. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax comprises a mixture of 30 to 90% by weight of linear hydrocarbons and 10 to 70% by weight of branched hydrocarbons.

56. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the distribution of molecular chain lengths within the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax is such that less than 6% of the molecules have less than 25 carbon atoms, 6 to 50% of the molecules have 25 to 29 carbon atoms, 20 to 45% of the molecules have 30 to 34 carbon atoms and 7 to 70% of the molecules have at least 35 carbon atoms.

57. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax is a product of catalytic polymerization of ethylene or copolymerization of ethylene with minor amounts of linear alpha-olefins having from 3 to 12 carbon atoms or maleic anhydride.

58. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the natural wax is selected from carnauba wax, candelilla wax, palm wax, lignite wax, ozokerite, lardaceine, ceresine wax and China wax.

59. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the wax comprises compounds selected from saturated hydrocarbons having from 25 to 31 carbon atoms, saturated alcohols having from 25 to 31 carbon atoms, saturated monocarboxylic acids having from 25 to 31 carbon atoms, esters obtained from the said alcohols and monocarboxylic acids and having from 50 to 62 carbon atoms, and their mixtures.

60. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein over 98% of the molecules of the microcrystalline hydrocarbon wax or natural wax have a molecular chain length ranging from 20 to 75 carbon atoms.